

JEFFERSON COUNTY
KENTUCKY : CONGREG CHURCH

DRAWER 11

KENTUCKY (BY COUNTY + TOWN)

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Kentucky

Counties & Towns

Jefferson County

Long Run Church

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

The Courier-Journal

Press and Wirephoto

LOUISVILLE, FRIDAY, JULY 13, 1956

New York Times Service, Inc.



Courier-Journal Photo

ANCESTORS OF TWO PRESIDENTS had ties with the old Long Run Baptist Church, north of U.S. 60 near the Jefferson-Shelby County line. President Lincoln's grandfather is buried under the church, and President Truman's grandmother was a member there during the 1840's. Present congregation plans to build new church a mile away.

Lincoln's Grandfather Bought Land Where Old Church May Be Razed

Truman's Folks Were Members

By BEN REEVES

Time may be running out for the history-rich old Long Run Baptist Church.

For more than 160 years, Baptist congregations have worshipped on the little knoll on Long Run Road north of U. S. 60 near Eastwood.

But the present congregation of about 125 active members has purchased a new tract on Tower Road, about a mile away, and plans to start construction of a new church building there as soon as possible.

"We feel it would be more honorable to take the old building down than to leave it here alone to fall down," said the Rev. Roscoe Thornbury, pastor of the church, yesterday.

Want To Keep Building

But Mr. Thornbury said the congregation wants to preserve the old building as a shrine if a way can be found.

Earlier this year he wrote to Governor Chandler, asking if the church could be made a State shrine. The Governor replied that he was turning the matter over to the Division of State Parks for prompt attention.

"That was about four months ago, but we haven't heard anything from them yet," the pastor said. He added that the church doesn't have enough money to

take care of both the old and new buildings.

The present brick building was put up in 1845. It was the third building on the site.

Early Lincoln Home

The original church building was the home of Abraham Lincoln—sometimes spelled Linkhorn—grandfather of the 16th President of the United States.

A surveyor's entry book at the Jefferson County Courthouse shows that the elder Abe Lincoln took title to 400 acres of land on the Long Run in 1780.

But he was murdered by Indians six years later and buried close to his cabin door.

The Lincoln family didn't live in the log house after that, but kept title to the property until 1822 when Mordecai Lincoln, the president's uncle, sold it to Benjamin Bridgers.

Used as Community House

The house became a sort of community meetinghouse and a place of Baptist worship.

The worshippers formally organized the Long Run Baptist Church there in 1794. The church affiliated with the Salem Association of Baptists three years later.

Some time before 1800, a stone section was added to the building. And it was there that the present Long Run Association of Baptists, now the largest Baptist group in Kentucky, was organized in 1803.

Bridgers deeded the church

property to the congregation in 1834.

Long Run expanded the next decade, and in 1844 the congregation tore down the old stone-and-log structure. The stones became the foundation of the present brick building.

Truman's Ancestors There

Number 103 on the membership roster that year was Harriet Louisa Gregg, who became the wife of Solomon Young. She and her husband later moved to Missouri and became the grandparents of President Harry S. Truman.

In the rebuilding and enlarging of the church in 1845, several graves were covered under the foundation. One of them

Column 6, back page, this section

DAY MORNING, JI

Baptist Church 111 Years Old May Be Razed

Continued from First Page
was that of the first Abraham Lincoln.

Why is the present congregation pulling up stakes?

"There is a desperate need for space and new quarters," said the pastor, Mr. Thornbury. "There are 500 to 600 people living in this general area, and through lack of facilities we fail to reach many of them."

Criticism Expected

Mr. Thornbury said he realizes that many persons outside the congregation will be "a little critical of our tearing down the church." If the State doesn't step in and make it a shrine, the group hopes that some civic group will aid in its preservation.

The old building's immediate need is for a new roof.

"This one has been patched and repatched so many times that I doubt if it could be done again," the pastor said.

Also, the south wall—the one over the covered graves—has begun to pull loose.

If the old building is razed, many of its timbers can be used in the new one. They include joists and rafters made of yellow poplar, and "without a rotten spot in them."

The old church sits on a one-acre tract, which is largely taken up by the burial ground. But many stones have been broken and destroyed, and only a few of the really old ones remain.

Will Care for Cemetery

"As long as we own this property, we are going to do our best to take care of the cemetery," Mr. Thornbury said.

The 33-year-old pastor and his family live in a parsonage the congregation recently built on its new church site. He holds services at the church two days a week—on Sundays and Wednesdays. A native of Logan, W. Va., he was graduated this spring from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary here.

What the Long Run congregation does not want is for some group to take over the old church and commercialize it or charge admission.

"It's been used as a house of worship too long for that," the pastor said.

111-Year-Old Long Run Church, Rejected As Shrine, May Be Razed

The 111-year-old Long Run Baptist Church, on a site where the ancestors of two presidents have lived or worshipped, may be razed.

The Department of Conservation has turned down a proposal that the old church near Eastwood be made a shrine, it was learned today.

The Rev. Roscoe Thornbury, pastor of the church, earlier this year wrote Gov. A. B. Chandler asking if the church could be made an historical shrine.

The Governor referred the request to the Department of Conservation.

Mr. Thornbury said that was the last he heard of the matter.

Budget Won't Permit

However, a spokesman in Frankfort told a reporter today that Conservation Commissioner Laban Jackson informed the

Long Run Baptist Association "months ago" that the "current budget will not allow us to purchase the property for a State shrine."

The letter was written to Ben S. Mitchell, director of missions for the association.

Mitchell said today that he had received the letter.

Baptist congregations have worshipped on the small knoll on Long Run Road north of U.S. 60 for more than 160 years.

New Site Bought

The present congregation has bought a new tract on Tower Road, about a mile away, and plans to erect a new church building there as soon as possible. "There is a desperate need for more space," said the pastor.

"We feel it would be more honorable to take the old build-

ing down than to leave it here alone to fall down," Mr. Thornbury said.

But the congregation, he added, wants to preserve the old building as a shrine if a way can be worked out.

The present brick building, the third on the site, was built in 1845.

Home of a Lincoln

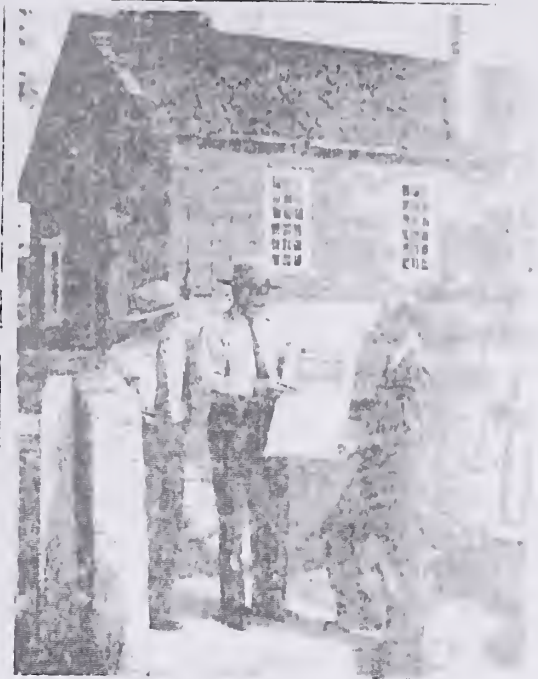
The original church building had first been the home of Abraham Lincoln, grandfather of the 16th President of the United States.

He was slain by Indians in 1786 and is buried under the present church.

President Harry S. Truman's grandmother, Mrs. Harriet Gregg Young, worshipped at the church in the 1810's.

LOUISVILLE COURIER-JOURNAL

7/13/36



OFFICIAL LOOK into the history of Long Run Baptist Church, near Eastwood, is taken by from left, Frank Sarles, historian of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, Ernest L. Wright, Jr., superintendent of the Lincoln National Historical Park at Hodgenville, and the Rev. Roscoe Thornbury, pastor. They are looking at plans of a Treasury warrant deeding 400 acres to Abraham Lincoln's grandfather, believed buried beneath church.

This Historic Spot Should Be Preserved

WE WONDER sometimes what other states might have done with the rich, historic birthright that is Kentucky's. They would almost certainly have treated it more respectfully than we have done. Imagine how Indiana or Illinois would have cared for the land on which Lincoln's forebears lived and died. In any other state, indeed, the heritage of the Long Run Baptist Church and its surroundings would long ago have become a public shrine and a place of pilgrimage for the nation.

The gradual decay of Long Run church and the obliteration of its historic past has been well known to most of us. Now the Baptist congregation which has so far held the old place together is forced to move and there is no state agency willing or able to buy the church property, to restore it and to mark it suitably.

We have a State Committee for the Preservation of Historic Sites and Landmarks, as well as a State Historical Society. The probable fate of Long Run Baptist Church urgently needs the help of these and similar groups throughout the state. The State Conservation Department has already written the church that it cannot intervene. But private groups could surely raise funds to buy the land and restore the structure with help from this community, from Baptist churches and from the multitude of Lincoln admirers throughout the country. The effort is surely worth making. The congregation which has so long held the little church together would certainly be willing to do so for a little longer if it could be saved as a shrine. Kentucky's very roots are sunk in this small churchyard and its surrounding slopes.

7/14/36

Two Avenues Appear For Long Run Church

Members of historic Long Run Baptist Church, near Eastwood, yesterday had two reasons to believe that the old building and its site may be preserved as a national shrine.

Thomas Carpenter Fisher, a Washington attorney, formerly of Louisville, has asked for a six-month option to buy the church and its surrounding property.

And two representatives of the United States Interior Department yesterday visited the church and went over some of the records with its pastor, the Rev. Roscoe Thornbury. This was in answer to an investigation requested of the Interior Department by Senator Clements.

Frank Sarles, historian of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, and Ernest L. Wright, Jr., superintendent of the Lincoln National Historical Park at Hodgenville, examined evidence which the church that Abraham Lincoln's grandfather was buried beneath the building.

The elder Lincoln lived near the church site and was slain nearby by an Indian. Interest in making the site a shrine began when the congregation announced it was building a new church about a mile away and might have to tear down the old building unless it was bought for historical showing.

No Present Indication That U. S. Will Buy It

The Interior Department investigators said they would forward their findings to Washington. They said there is no present indication that the Federal Government plans to buy the property. Senator Clements introduced a bill in the Senate to make a shrine of the church, a spokesman for the Interior Department said the current budget will not allow us to purchase the property.

In asking for a six-month option to buy the church property for \$10,000, Fisher wrote Mr. Thornbury that he hoped the church was quiring title to the property to solicit a foundation for the restoration and maintenance of the old church. One object was to keep the church in Baptist hands to make of it a Baptist shrine memorial.

Mr. Thornbury said the price suggested by Fisher "would be fine" but the deacons "were not too happy" about Fisher's offer that the purchase of the property include its name, "Long Run Baptist Church." This would require the congregation to change its new name when it moves to its new building.

KENTUCKY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

COMMUNIQUE

VOL. 10

AUGUST, 1956

NO. 1

Historic Long Run Baptist Church in Jefferson County is in danger of being razed this fall by its present congregation according to its pastor, the Reverend Roscoe Thornbury. A new church is being built on Tower Road, about a mile away, which will allow for necessary expansion. A contractor has estimated that about \$5,000 worth of building material can be taken from the old building. It is the understanding of the Kentucky Historical Society that the old church and an acre of ground will be deeded to the Society or to The Filson Club of Louisville for approximately the value of the usable material in the structure. All interested in the preservation of this or any other historic site in Kentucky, contact your local historical society or the Kentucky Historical Society in Frankfort.



Courier-Journal Photo

OFFICIAL LOOK into the history of Long Run Baptist Church, near Eastwood, is taken by, from left, Frank Sarles, historian of Cumberland Gap National Park; Earnest L. Wright, Jr., superintendent of the Lincoln National Historical Park at Hodgenville; and the Rev. Roscoe Thornbury, pastor. They are looking at a copy of a Treasury warrant deeding 400 acres to Abraham Lincoln's grandfather, believed buried beneath church.

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Frank Sarles, historian of Cumberland Gap National Park, and Ernest L. Wright, Jr., superintendent of the Lincoln National Historical Park at Hodgenville, examined evidence held by the church that Abraham Lincoln's grandfather was buried beneath the building.

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No Present Indication That U. S. Will Buy It

The Interior Department investigators said they would forward their findings to Washington. They said there is no present indication that the Federal Government plans to buy the property. After Senator Clements introduced a bill in the Senate to make a shrine of the church, a spokesman for the Interior Department said "the current budget will not allow us to purchase the property."

In asking a six-month option to buy the church property for \$10,000, Fisher wrote Mr. Thornbury that he hoped, "after acquiring title to the property, to solicit a foundation fund for restoration and maintenance of the old church. Our objective is to keep the church in Baptist hands to make of it a Baptist-Lincoln memorial."

Mr. Thornbury said the price suggested by Fisher "would be fine," but the deacons "were not too happy" about Fisher's request that the purchase of the property include its name, "Long Run Baptist Church." This would require the congregation to find a new name when it moves to its new building.

The historic Long Run Baptist Church building in Jefferson County, Kentucky, is in danger of being razed. It is located on land that once belonged to Captain Abraham Lincoln, Kentucky pioneer and grandfather of the Sixteenth President.

The original log building was erected about 1797. The second church edifice was constructed out of local stone and the present brick building was erected in 1833. Subsequently the brick structure was enlarged in 1845, and there is a tradition that the grave of Captain Lincoln along with four or five other graves were covered by the extension. However, a thorough search under the floor of the church has failed to reveal any graves of Kentucky pioneers.

The Long Run Church and burial ground was located on a one acre tract within the boundary of Captain Lincoln's four hundred acre farm near Hughes Station which was established in 1780. An early record reveals that "in 1786 a man was killed here by an Indian, while he was coming to the station from his land nearby on Long Run, where he had been putting in a crop. His family resided in the station and soon after his death the widow and children removed to Washington County." The logical assumption is that this pioneer was the grandfather of the President.

The present Baptist congregation is building a new church on Tower Road, about a mile away and a contractor has estimated that approximately \$5,000 worth of building material can be salvaged from the old building.

To preserve the structure as a national or state shrine, Thomas Carpenter Fisher, a Washington attorney, and former Louisville, Kentucky, resident has asked for a six months option to buy the church and its surrounding property. Meanwhile, United States Interior Department officials have been studying the church's history in relation to its association with the Lincoln family.

Senator Earle C. Clements of Kentucky introduced a bill in the Senate to make a shrine of the church, but a spokesman for the Interior Department said, "The current budget will not allow us to purchase the property." Interior Department investigators have said there is no present indication that the Federal Government plans to buy the property.

In asking for a six months option to buy the church property for \$10,000, Fisher indicated to the Rev. Roscoe Thornbury, the pastor of the historic church, that he hoped "after acquiring title to the property, to solicit a foundation fund for the restoration and maintenance of the old church." It is Fisher's hope to make the Long Run Church building a Baptist-Lincoln Memorial."

*This article will appear
in the Jan. 1957 issue of
the Lincoln Lane*

R. H. M.

Suite 50 Rust Building
1001 Fifteenth Street, N.W.
Washington 5, D. C.

16 November 1956

Lincoln National Life Foundation
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Attention: Director

Dear Sir:

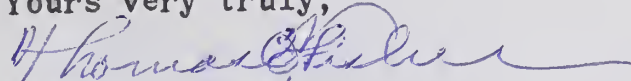
I am enclosing herewith copies of correspondence and news items with regard to the Long Run Baptist Church near Louisville in Jefferson County, Kentucky. Please go over them carefully and let me know to what extent your Foundation will be able to participate in the objectives to be attained.

I am wondering if the Lincoln National Life Foundation is in a position to contribute \$2,500.00 at this time to the purchase price of the property or can undertake to get some one to donate that much now. Have any checks made payable to The Louisville Trust Company, Trustee of the Long Run Baptist Church Fund and mail direct to the Trust Company. I will appreciate your letting me know what is determined upon.

I am well acquainted with Dr. Louis A. Warren, your former Director.

At the present similar letters are being limited to eight persons and organizations.

Yours very truly,



Thomas C. Fisher

TCF/psf

Suite 50, Rust Building
1001 Fifteenth Street, N. W.
Washington 5, D. C.
13 November 1956

The Louisville Trust Company
Louisville 2, Kentucky

Attention: Mr. Ira Porter, Vice President

Dear Mr. Porter:

I refer to the conversation I had with you in September concerning the old Long Run Baptist Church and the several copies of correspondence I have sent you in the meantime.

There is enclosed the signed original copy of the minutes of a business meeting of the Church held October 24, 1956 accepting my proposition of September 10, 1956, copy of which I sent you before leaving Kentucky. I have a copy for myself and have sent several others copies of these minutes.

Please open an account with the enclosed check for \$25.00 in the name of your trust company as Trustee of Long Run Baptist Church Fund. I am asking others who contribute to this initial purchase fund to make their checks payable to your company as Trustee. I will be in Louisville the first or second week in December and hope that more than enough will be on deposit by that time to purchase the option. I will send you a draft of the proposed option, within a few days.

After receiving \$11,000.00, please hold any additional sums in a separate account for restoration of the church building and cemetery and copying and indexing the minutes. As you know \$10,000.00 of the first \$11,000.00 is for the purchase price, of which \$1,000.00 is to be used for the purchase of the option and credited on purchase when the balance of \$9,000.00 is paid. From the remaining \$1,000.00, your fee and incidental expenses shall be paid, including the title fee and survey. Anything remaining shall be transferred to the restoration fund. In taking the option to the property and to be followed by the full title, upon payment of the purchase price, your company is acting as trustee for those who put up the money in proportion to the amounts contributed.

In event the full purchase price is not raised within six months from the date of the option, the fund on hand, after deducting the \$1,000.00 for the option and your expenses, shall be returned pro-rata to the contributors. If only enough is paid in to purchase the option, of course there will be nothing to return. However, those making the contributions totaling less than \$10,000.00 and expenses, or anyone or more of them, upon ten days notice to the others shall have the right to exercise the option and take title to the property and records.

13 November 1956

I personally subscribe to \$500.00 of the \$11,000.00 fund and will pay it within the period from this date to the expiration of the option.

On my account, please have the title examined at once so we can know that a good fee simple title can be obtained. The Church is incorporated. The property was originally obtained by the Trustees of Long Run Baptist Church from Benjamin Bridges by deed dated July 4, 1834. Benjamin Bridges obtained title from Mordecai Lincoln, oldest son of Captain Abraham Lincoln, deceased, by title deed in January 1797 followed by deed dated April 2, 1822. I do not have the deed books and page numbers.

The Long Run Baptist Church apparently was organized sometime prior to 1794. The exact date is unknown. It was probably gathered and pastored first by John Waller, one of the Baptist preachers prosecuted in Virginia for preaching contrary to the tenets of the established Church and who was defended by Patrick Henry. The first house of worship, according to tradition, was the Lincoln cabin, which was used by permission of the Lincoln heirs, until a stone building was erected on the same site prior to 1800. The stone building was replaced in 1844 by the present building, which was erected on the same foundation, somewhat enlarged. According to the minutes it was not until 1834 that the Church discovered that it had no deed to the property, which accounts for the date of the Bridges deed.

I suggest that the title and other legal matters be referred to Mr. Joseph Stepher, who is now the attorney for the Long Run Association. I am usually too far away to handle these matters, besides my relationship with the project makes it advisable that someone else act as the legal counsel.

Also have a survey made so that we will know the lines and have an accurate description of the property. I think that a part of the cemetery may have been acquired subsequent to the Bridges conveyance. Of this I am not certain. The attorney must be sure that all the church lot and cemetery is included in the description and final draft of the option.

Seven or eight people are being invited to join together in contributing the initial \$11,000.00 to purchase the property. The donors of this fund will be able to deduct the amounts donated for income tax purposes.

It does not seem advisable to give this any publicity at the present time. After the option is acquired, then wide publicity will be given to the project and solicitation made for a fund to restore the building, furnishings, grounds and cemetery and to copy, index and preserve the original minutes and documents. Roughly, I understand this will cost another \$75,000.00 or more. This part of the project should be under the sponsorship of a committee of prominent persons to be named by the donors of the purchase price and should include representatives of the Filson Club, Kentucky Historical Society, Historical Committees of the Long Run Association of Baptists, and General Association of Baptists in Kentucky, the Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. I have contacted or am contacting each of these organizations.

13 November 1956

After restoration, arrangements must be made to support and care for the memorial or shrine. This will probably involve the establishment of a substantial trust fund, if an already existing organization is not in a position to take over at that point.

I originally proposed that the Church permit those of us interested to help the Long Run Church raise \$100,000.00 for restoration and improvement, so that the Church could continue to use the present building as its place of worship. This was not interesting to the Board of Deacons. They have determined that the Church should move its location and have modern facilities. They do not want any responsibility for the preservation of the present building and cemetery. It was stated that they are only interested in salvage of the building material or what they can get out of the property. They drive a rather hard bargain. None of the present membership is interested in historical preservation. It is not in line with their objectives.

I give you these details so that you can answer inquiries and be entirely familiar with the objectives to be accomplished.

Please call on me for any additional information desired.

Yours very truly,

TCP:edf
Enclosures

Thomas C. Fisher

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MINUTES OF THE LONG RUN BAPTIST
CHURCH

On Wednesday evening, Oct. 24, 1956 The long Run Baptist Church was called to a special Business Meeting as ordered by a marjority vote present on the preceding Sunday evening.

This Business meeting was conducted according to the Church By-laws, that is ten per-cent (10%) of the membership constitutes a quorum, this number being required to hold a special Business Meeting. There were Thirty (30) Active members present. There are 243 member on roll.

Rev. Thornbury read the respective letters that were received from Mr. Fisher (Thomas C.) concerning his purchase of our present Church property and questions were held and discussion held.

Mr. Ollie James Bryant made a motion that we sell to said Mr. Fisher an option on our present Church property, accepting the resolution that Mr. Fisher has written up. Mr. H.H. Broyles second the motion. The motion was carried.

On motion duly seconded and carried the following resolutions were adopted:

Resolved, that the Long Run Baptist Church accepts the offer of Thomas C. Fisher, set forth in his letter of September 10, 1956 addressed to our pastor, Rev. R.C. Thornbury, to purchase the real-estate of the church on which the old church building is located, include the cemetary, the church building and it's furnishing, all to be free of liens and encumbrances, And to include the original minute books and records of the Church and the name "Long Run Baptist Church", as set forth in more detial in said letter and subsequent letters, on the following terms and conditions:

1. There shall be paid to the Long Run Baptist Church the sum of one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) cash upon delivery of the duly excuted option to the Louisville Trust Company as Trustee;

2. The said sum of one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) shall be credited on the purchase price of \$10,000.00 in the event the option is exercised and the property purchased, other-wise be retained by the Church with no claim for refund or any part thereof;

3. The option shall be submitted to the Church for final approval before signing and delivery, and shall be dated not later than sixty days from the adoption of this resolution.

Be it further resolve, that the Trustees and the clerk of the Church be and they are authorized and directed to certify a copy of these resolutions and deliver same to Mr. Fisher.

A motion was made to adjourn by Mr. Forest Roberts Second by Mr. Fred Yates. All stood and were dismissed with prayer.

Route 18
Anchorage, Alaska
October 8, 1960

Mr Thomas C. Fisher
12770 So. Stafford Street
Arlington 6, Virginia

Dear Mr Fisher

Thank you for your letter of September 30. It does seem to me not far from agreement. One to the way I stated one of the questions in the letter of September 30 it is necessary for this letter.

We are getting your advice of two local banks that we are not responsible to see 1/2 of the purchase price as payment for the option. This was the intention meaning of the one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) to be on deposit at the Louisville Trust Co. This of course would be toward the purchase price when our transaction is completed. If this is acceptable to you and your associates then, we have reached agreement. As soon as I receive your reply we should be in position to take the necessary action. Thank you for your continued interest in the matter.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Thomas C. Fisher

1001 - 15th St. N. W.
Suite 50

Executive 3-1607

July 30, 1956

Rev. Roscoe Thornbury
Long Run Baptist Church
R.F.D.
Achorago, Kentucky

My dear Reverend Thornbury:

My sister, Miss Marion Fisher, sent me a copy of the July 20 Jeffersonian. In it I see a picture of the old Long Run Baptist Church, which is to be torn down according to present plans.

Let me implore the members of the Church to withhold action for the time being. A number of years ago I tried to interest the Church in permitting a restoration of the old Church. However, this did not meet with approval because the Church was interested more in modernizing the building and making a Sunday School plant out of it to meet modern need. This is entirely understandable and I do not criticize. But, those interested in historical preservation and restorations would not be interested in further defacing the building by modernizing it; and it was impossible to interest anyone in contributing money for that purpose.

Since the Church has decided to move its location to a new one and build a new building, I think it would be entirely possible to have the United States Government or some historic organization acquire title, for a reasonable price, and restore it as a place of historic interest. Buildings of much less importance and of much less historic interest have been acquired and restored at the cost of thousands of dollars, and are now tourist attractions of no small import.

It has been almost conclusively established that Captain Abraham Lincoln, grandfather of the President, was killed and his grave is under the present Church. This fact has been established by public records and traditions that cannot be successfully contradicted. It has been accepted by the leading Lincoln historians, including Senator Albert J. Beveridge (he was not thoroughly convinced), Dr. William H. Barton, Miss Ida M. Tarbell, and Dr. Louis E. Warren, and others. I worked with all of these people in investigating the original sources. An address by me before the Willson Club of Louisville, Kentucky, on November 1, 1937, is published in the Willson Club Quarterly for October 1946.

July 30, 1956

There is very little question or doubt in my mind that the original cabin of Capt. Abraham Lincoln, which was deserted after his assassination by the Indians, stood on the same spot as the present Church; and that this cabin became the first place of meeting of the Long Run Baptist Church. The present Church building was built in 1845 and was dedicated in May of that year, the actual building probably having taken place after the harvest of 1844.

In addition to being closely connected with the ancestors of President Lincoln, the property on which it stands having originally been owned by them, it is also the Church to which the ancestors of President Truman belonged -- his great-grandparents and his Grandmother Young belonged to this Church. Some of his ancestors are buried in the old churchyard, which contains the graves of many pioneer settlers of Jefferson County.

In addition to these historical events and connections, the Church was the place of organization of the Long Run Association on September 16, 1893. The Association was organized in the stone building that preceded the present brick building. The foundations of the old stone building constitute a part of the foundation of the present brick building, and stones from the old church complete the foundation. Every church in the Association and the Association itself should be much interested in preserving this old building and having it restored to its original condition as a memorial to the Baptist faith in Kentucky. As you probably know, the Long Run Association is one of the largest Baptist Associations in the world, probably the second or third largest, and also one of the most important. A few years ago the Associations at Atlanta, Georgia, and London, England, only were larger.

I also have a personal feeling towards the Church, as it is the first church I can remember attending. My father and mother at one time were members. A great, great-uncle of mine, Rev. Zachias Carpenter, was at one time pastor of the Church.

For the reasons set out herein, I humbly ask that the Church defer taking any action that will obliterate this building or its church ground. Once the building is torn down, it will not be long before the graveyard and grounds will be just another cow pasture.

Please let me hear from you.

Yours very truly,

Thomas C. Fisher

COPY

Route 2
Anchorage, Ky
August 9, 1956

Thomas C. Fisher
1001 - 15th St., N.W.
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Fisher:

Thank you for your letter of July 30. I had heard of your interest in our building but did not know your location until your letter arrived. Rev. and Mrs. Weaver were here two weeks ago and spoke of you.

Let me assure you that every effort possible is being made to restore and preserve the old building. We are in no ways anxious to take it down. We are faced with a desperate need for a new building. Our attendance has increased a great deal in the past two years and if we are to continue to grow we must expand our physical plant. Since there is no room to expand and for many other reasons our church is planning to move to a new location. We already have four acres of land and a new three bedroom house on it. In order to build our new building due to our financial condition it is necessary that we use as much material from the old building as possible.

I have met with Mr. Charles Hines Sect. and Treasurer of the Historical Society at Frankfort, and if a way can be found to furnish the church the money to equal the value we feel the old building is to us we will be more than glad to turn this property over to the Filson Club or State Historical Society until the finances can be arranged to restore and take the necessary steps to preserve it.

We as a church have no choice. We either move as a church or die out. And we cannot move unless we use the material in the old building or get the money it is worth. If it had not been the difficult task of deciding what to do with the old church we would have perhaps already moved. There will be another feature in the Courier Journal Sunday Aug 12, which should give the crowded inadequate way we are conducting our Sunday School and worship services.

If you have any suggestions about what we should do, how funds may be raised, let me know at once. I will meet with Mr. Hinds next week and it would be a help to have suggestions from you.

Do you have any information about some original minutes of the church written during the Civil War in red ink, that gives valuable information? The minutes between 1353 and 1380 have not been located. I have checked with the Seminary and the Filson Club. With these our records would be complete from 1903 to the present.

The bill which Senator Clements has introduced to the Senate was not acted upon. We would like to get our building as quickly as possible. With the election so close and the political so unsettled it is not to our advantage to wait until Congress meets again.

Many people are interested in this project. Harry Truman has expressed hope that the building will be preserved. Governor Chandler thinks it is a worth while project, but the State has no money to use for this purpose.

Thank you again for your interest.

Very truly yours
/s/ Roscoe Thornbury, Pastor
Long Run Baptist Church

Middleton, Kentucky

August 23, 1956

WAL TA SYNNOTTA
SHILLING HOUSE DOT
1787 K STREET, N. W.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Rev. Roscoe Thornbury
Long Run Baptist Church
Rt 2
Anchorage, Kentucky

THOMAS CARPENTER FISHER
ANANAT WILLIAM TANKAH

Dear Reverend Thornbury,

I intended to answer your letter of August 9th before I left Washington for Kentucky. I am now in Middleton Kentucky and I hope to be at Long Run for services on Sunday, the 26th.

I note with interest that the church is willing to turn the property over to the Filson Club or to the State Historical Society until arrangements can be made to restore the old building and to take the necessary steps to preserve it, provided "a way can be found to furnish the church the money equal to the value" of the building materials in the old building.

I would very much like to know what value the church places on the building material in its present condition. I mean by that the value without any time, labor or expense being required to tear down the old building and to clean and prepare the material for use in another building. This would be necessary in order to interest anyone who may be willing to put up the money.

I am a member of the Filson Club. The Filson Club is not organized to acquire such property and supervise its restoration. While it undoubtedly would be most interested in assisting with such a project it has no money for that purpose. Of that I am certain. While I am a member of the State Historical Society, I do not know what its attitude is toward such projects but I am under the impression that its resources and authority suffers the same limitations as does the Filson Club.

It seems to me that the Department of Interior, as suggested by Senator Clements, is the most logical agency to approach considering the limited time for doing anything. Of course, I would much prefer seeing the Long Run Association or some other Baptist organization take some hand in the matter, but that would probably take too much time.

The important thing now is to interest someone or a group of individuals who have the means to meet the immediate financial requirements of the church, based on the building material value and then make long range plans.

You asked about the original minutes of the church written during the Civil War. I have never had these minutes. I was informed that they were burned with the house of old Rev. W. E. Powers many years ago. The minutes you refer to as written in red ink during the Civil War are not the minutes of the Long Run Baptist Church. They are the minutes of the Flat Rock Baptist Church, now the Pleasant Grove Baptist Church at Avoca. These are deposited for safekeeping at the Filson Club.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Louisville, Kentucky
September 10, 1956

Rev. Roscoe Thornberry
Long Run Baptist Church
R.F.D. #2
Anchorage Kentucky

Dear Reverend Thornberry:

Pursuant to our telephone conversation of Saturday evening I am prepared, through The Louisville Trust Company, as agent and trustee, to request that the church give an option to The Trust Company, as agent and trustee, for a period of six months to purchase the real estate and property of the Long Run Baptist Church, including the cemetery, the old church building, and its furnishings. There shall be included with the purchase the name: "Long Run Baptist Church." This would necessitate the church changing its name to some other name but continuing the same organization. Also, it shall include the purchase of the original minutes, including the minutes down to the change of the name of the church organization.

The option shall be for the sum of \$10,000 payable cash. If this is satisfactory, please let me know at once and I will prepare the option, the option shall then be transmitted through The Trust Company to you for the church official signature. It is definitely understood that this option is not to be the option of The Louisville Trust Company in its corporate capacity but only in its capacity as agent and trustee for me and for those who will be associated with me.

It is the purpose, after acquiring title to the above property, to solicit a foundation fund for restoration and maintenance of the old church. Our objective is to keep the church in Baptist hands to make of it a Baptist-Lincoln Memorial.

I understand that representatives of the Department of Interior will call on you on Wednesday, September 12th, to look over the property with the possibility of recommending purchase by the United States Government as a historic shrine or national park. I and others do not look with favor on this because we do not feel that the United States Government should invest public funds in church property, however historic. Also, once it is acquired by the United States Government no type of religious service could be properly held on the grounds. While that is our feeling in the matter, as a matter of last resort we would fully cooperate with the Department of Interior, if we could not carry out our objective.

In the August COMMUNIQUE of the Kentucky Historical Society, received this morning, there is the following paragraph:

"Historic Long Run Baptist Church in Jefferson County is in danger of being razed this fall by its present congregation according to its pastor, the Reverend Roscoe Thornberry. A new church is being built on Tower Road,

September 10, 1956

about a mile away, which will allow for necessary expansion. A contractor has estimated that about \$5,000 worth of building material can be taken from the old building. It is the understanding of the Kentucky Historical Society that the old church and an acre of ground will be deeded to the Society or to The Filson Club of Louisville for approximately the value of the usable material in the structure. All interested in the preservation of this, or any other historic site in Kentucky, contact your local historical society or the Kentucky Historical Society in Frankfort."

It is our purpose to cooperate with any and all historical societies.

In acquiring title to the original minutes of the church, it is understood that the minutes will be copied and a copy furnished the church. In the meantime, the original minutes at all times would be available to the church until the copy is furnished. Your church would continue to use the building until your new edifice is ready for occupancy. It is requested that no publicity or news releases be given or made except through me or my associates.

Yours very sincerely,

TCF:md

Thomas C. Fisher

C O F Y

8/24/54

Lt 2 Anchorage Ky

Dear Mr. Fisher

We at Long Run are seriously considering your proposal to buy our building.

However there are a few things the Church has asked me to learn.

1. Will there be any objection on our using, The ~~Long~~ Long Run Baptist Church for a home?

2. May the deed contain a clause which if there is a failure to maintain the property in the future, the original Minutes will be returned to the Baptist Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

3. Will you explain in detail the organization for ownership.

4. That \$1,000 one thousand dollars be placed on deposit at the Louisville Trust Co before the option is signed.

As soon as we receive your reply the church will take a vote to determine what to do.

Mr. Frank Harlos, Cumberland Gap National Park Historian would like for you to let him know the exact time you plan to be in Louisville. He would like to go over the area of Taggart Station and the Lincoln Spring. He also suggested you contact Maj. Gen. T. S. Grant III
National Trust For Historical Preservation
Cotton House
Wash. D.C.

This organization has a fund to use for such a purpose as you plan. Thank you again for your interest

Sincerely,

/s/ Roscoe Thornberry

24 September 1856

Rev. Nelson Thornbury
Long Run Baptist Church
Anchorage, Ky., R. F. D. #2

Dear Brother Thornbury:

I have been hoping to hear from you ever since I returned to Washington. Very truly
After having received copyings from Nashville papers
and The Jeffersonian.

On the 10th of the month of
Journal of September 10, 1856, saying that the building
"had not too large" and in addition that the new
"Long Run Baptist Church" be included in any purchase of
the property.

I think that you can understand
that the building itself is a real historical value
as an old building of the architectural character of
the century alone and is very much like many of the
old country; that the building is a good one in
General Lincoln alone and is an important one in
Washington and that it is a very important one in
very little value to anyone interested in the building
and the name. By what name would it be possible
other than "Long Run Baptist Church"? That name is
known throughout the United States and is very famous
country, where every man's life and reputation have
been studied. Now, when I have heard of the building
in the old days, it is a very important one in
active church in the old country with one name and
some much confusion. You are trying to sell history
one of the names of selling history to build up the
church. I do not want you to do that. It is a long time
and I have to say of selling history at this time. I am
very glad you are very much interested in the
value. I don't think of the building, but I don't
Department of Interior, and I don't think of the building
without the name.

The Jeffersonian of September 10,
1856, says, "The correspondence which follows in regard to
concerning Fisher's plan for the building and the
the historic building." Fisher is saying "It is well
that a reply from Fisher will have been received by
September 10 and the other will be called on
for the office."

Let me say first that I gave my purpose and plan and that of those who will be associated with me in my letter of September 10, 1933. I do not intend to go further at this time. I asked that no publicity be given. Too much has appeared in the papers already. I consulted with newspaper men and public relations experts before I wrote asking for an option. In a matter of this sort publicity must be handled very carefully. Nothing should be appeared until an option was given, if it is to be given.

In the second place, I have nothing to which I can reply at this writing, except newspaper articles, which often are inaccurate.

I do hope that your people will decide to give the option on the terms outlined in my letter. Naturally, we will pay a reasonable sum - say \$100.00 - for the option. If the option is exercised the \$100.00 will apply to the purchase price. Otherwise it is your money and you shall have your property. We will have tried and no harm is done. If we cannot raise \$10,000.00 for you in six months time, I doubt that anyone else can raise half that much. We are willing to risk the \$100.00 and pay the trust company to act as our agents for the privilege of trying.

Very sincerely,

Thomas J. Fisher

Dear Mother - Thomas!

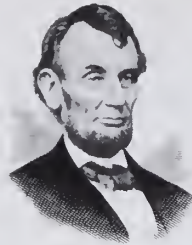
I acknowledge receipt of your letter of October 4, 1966, in regard to the matter on the Long Hill Baptist Church property. While the church is now more than I anticipated, my conversation with you and Mr. Young, I am not inclined to quibble about the \$1,000.00, since I assured that the project will be realized without delay.

Under these circumstances, I am reluctantly in favor of suggested resolutions, which I am submitting to you as a member of a regular or "dollar" membership newsletter. I suggest that you, as a member, contact your attorney with your attorney. All I am asking you to do is to be in substantially the same situation, without having to pay subscription fees and other costs.

[illegible]

I would like to close this letter by saying that I am sure that the 15th or 20th of March will be the best time to visit. If it is not done up to this time, I can get it done until after February 1st.

Please do not place the project in the hands of the
action of the House of Representatives. It is
my purpose to answer the question of the project
in the next few days. The project is being
projected to the House of Representatives. The
project is being jointly approved by the House of
Representatives. The project will be jointly approved by the House of Representatives.



Its name indicates its character

The Lincoln National Life Foundation

Fort Wayne, Indiana

R. GERALD MCMURTRY
DIRECTOR

November 20, 1956

Mr. Allen C. Steere
Home Office

Dear Allen:

I think this letter should be answered by some administrative official of the Company.

I certainly do not advocate making a contribution of \$2500 to this project. However, if I turn the proposition down Fisher will likely contact Mr. Menge directly.

Perhaps you can give him a final and decisive refusal.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gerald", with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Director

RGM/JA
Enc.

P.S. Please return the letter for our files.

RGM

November 26, 1956

Mr. Thomas C. Fisher
Suite 50 Rust Building
1001 Fifteenth Street, N. W.
Washington 5, D. C.

Dear Mr. Fisher:

Dr. R. Gerald McMurtry, Director of the Lincoln National Life Foundation, has talked with us about your interest in purchasing the Long Run Baptist Church near Louisville in Jefferson County, Kentucky, and your request that the Foundation make a contribution toward the purchase price.

The budget of the Foundation is already appropriated for the next year, and we regret to advise that we do not have funds which will be available to assist in the project mentioned.

Sincerely yours,

Second Vice President
and General Counsel

ACS:dg

Grandfather Lincoln's Grave Site of Church

The Long Run Baptist Church, near Louisville, marks the grave of Abraham Lincoln, grandfather and namesake of the 16th President of the United States.

When the elder Lincoln migrated from Rockingham County, Virginia, about 1782, he settled near Green River in the present Lincoln County, later moving to a place on Long Run Creek, near the settlement of Morgan Hughes Station.

One day while clearing the forest near his cabin, Grandfather Lincoln was attacked and killed by Indians. Mordecai, the eldest son, grabbed a gun and from the cabin door, shot and killed one of the Indians, while another son, Josiah, ran one-half mile to Morgan Station for help.

Witnessing the incident was 8-year-old Thomas Lincoln, who later became the Great Emancipator's father. After the massacre, the widow, Bersheba Lincoln, and her children moved to Washington County, where Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks were married June 12, 1806.

The Long Run farm became the property of an uncle, Mordecai Lincoln, who kept it until 1822.

A log cabin, built about 1784, housed the first church which was replaced by the present plain red brick building completed and dedicated in May, 1845.

Lincoln's Grandfather's Grave Located at Church

The Long Run Baptist Church, east of Louisville, Ky., marks the grave of Abraham Lincoln, grandfather and namesake of the 16th President of the United States.

When the elder Lincoln migrated from Rockingham County, Va., about 1782, he settled near Green River in the present Lincoln County, Ky., later moving to a place on Long Run Creek, near the settlement of Morgan Hughes Station.

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The Long Run farm became the property of an uncle, Mordecai Lincoln, who kept it until 1822.

A log cabin, built about 1784, housed the first church which was replaced by the present plain red brick building completed and dedicated in May, 1945.

Here, today, members of the Baptist church gather every Sunday morning and evening and Wednesday nights to worship God and visit together as the pioneers did in the days of the Lincoln family.

A Historic Site Belatedly Recognized

LONG RUN Baptist Church is only a fire-blackened ruin off Shelbyville Road near Eastwood. But its site is rich in historic associations. Abraham Lincoln's grandfather lies buried somewhere in the church yard. So do forebears of former President Harry S. Truman. Its gravestones mark the burial places of Kentucky's pioneers.

The congregation plans a new building elsewhere, the fourth in a succession that have housed this group, Kentucky's oldest organization of Baptists. A fire last year destroyed the third edifice that had stood upon the spot—modest brick building that dated from 1845.

Gravestones Remain

In 1956 efforts were made to have the church and its land set aside as a state or national shrine. They failed, and now all that remains is the land, a handful of gravestones, and the shell of the burned building. However, Fiscal Court is considering purchase of the site. It would erect a marker telling of the historical significance, and maintain the grounds in some order. It would be a fitting, if belated, decision.

The site is less than a mile from the county's new Long Run Park—astonishingly unspoiled terrain in which it is easy to forget how close it is to a crowded city. County Judge Bertram Van Arsdale has suggested using the bricks from the ruin to make pillars supporting a roof over a terrace formed from the stones of the old foundation. There is, however, something picturesque in ruins themselves. Perhaps it would be more suitable to leave the shell as it might stand after removal of such parts of the walls as could endanger visitors.

Pinning Down Long Run's Past

Diggers Find Walls Of 1800

Visiting the burned-out Long Run Baptist Church these days gives one the feeling of being in a Roman ruin.

A Louisville archaeologist and his co-workers have excavated several feet into the foundation of the historic structure and have found other, earlier foundations dating to 1800.

They have also sifted out a number of interesting objects: roundheaded pins, slate pencils, a scrap of paper from an old Bible, clay marbles, old nails whose heads were hammered out after they were heated, bits of blue-on-white pottery, and an old ax head.

Grave Site Not Found

Dr. Jerry Vardaman, professor of archaeology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and student helpers yesterday finished eight months of digging at the site on Long Run Road about two miles northeast of U.S. 60.

They met with one disappointment in not finding the cabin or the grave sites of President Abraham Lincoln's grandfather, which were believed to be under the church. But they did find in the area the site where the first Abraham Lincoln lived before moving to Long Run.

The uncovered foundations show the first stone church building (a log cabin in 1780 was the very first) measured 18½ feet by 32 feet. Later this was enlarged to 44 by 32. The excavators have dug down to the original dirt floor of the old church.

Old Building Abandoned

In 1844 the 2-in-1 old building was abandoned and the stone from the east and south walls was used in building a new church measuring 40 by 60 feet. That's the one that burned Christmas Eve, 1960.

Dr. Vardaman noted that the original 1800 church was surprisingly "modern," with plaster on the walls and on the white oak ceiling. Plaster lines in the 1844 church show how the floor sloped down to the pulpit.

When seminary student Charles Blanc, Knoxville, came across a scrap of printed matter measuring about an inch, he and Dr. Vardaman immediately recognized from the few words on it that it was from the Sermon on The Mount.

The 100 roundheaded pins found in the digging indicate to Dr. Vardaman that the

women held quilting bees in the church. The slate pencils—little bits of slate used to write on slates—indicate that perhaps the church also served as a school.

The wooden floor in the 1844 church was made of tongue-in-groove boards of random widths. Contemporary objects found in the burned-out church—children's scissors, electric conduit holders, coins, and parts of a piano—were dumped into a hole and covered up.

"A hundred years from now, somebody might want to know what was in the church that burned," Dr. Vardaman explained.

No Old Coins Found

The fact that no old coins were found in the old church indicate that its worshippers were Baptists and therefore "silver and gold have I none," Dr. Vardaman quipped. The oldest of the coins found was dated 1918.

At least one object found in the ruins has not been identified. It's a round ivory or bone object with a metal top. The broken top of a pale green bottle found in the 1844 church enabled Dr. Vardaman to fix the date when Locust Grove was abandoned because similar bottles were found there. Locust Grove, on Blankenbaker Lane, was the home of George Rogers Clark and is being turned in to a historic shrine.

Other interesting items about the church are that its window glass was extremely thin—about a third of the thickness of today's glass—and that it had a shingle roof of red cedar.

Going To Palestine

Jefferson County bought the Long Run ruins and will preserve them as a historic shrine. A new Long Run Church has been built nearby. County employees assisted Dr. Vardaman and 20 seminary students in the digging.

Pins Tell Of Busy Quilting Bees Held In 19th Century Church

By JEAN HOWERTON

From Long Run, Dr. Vardaman and a group of his students will go June 11 to Palestine, for more digging of an even more historic nature.

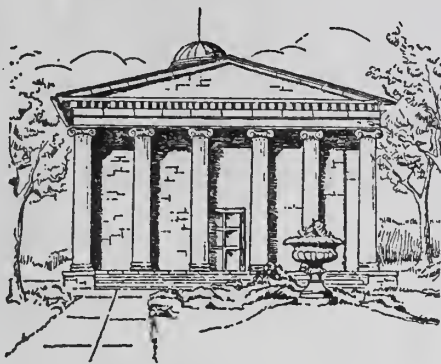


THROUGH A WINDOW of the burned-out Long Run Baptist Church, Charles Blanc, left, and Dr. Jerry Vardaman are pictured examining an excavation chart. The bottom line of the plaster on the opposite wall shows how the floor of the 1844 church building sloped to the pulpit.



Staff Photos by Charles Darneal

HISTORIC OBJECTS found in the church ruins include roundheaded pins, slate pencils, the top of a bottle, a clay marble, a nail, and an ax head. The round object at left, made of bone or ivory with a metal top, is unidentified as yet, but may be part of a cane. Excavations by Southern Baptist Theological Seminary personnel revealed the foundations of two early churches dating from 1800.



OLD STATE HOUSE
HOME OF THE SOCIETY

KENTUCKY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ARCHIVES MUSEUM LIBRARY

Box 104

FRANKFORT, KENTUCKY

August 3, 1962

GOVERNOR BERT COMBS, *Chancellor*
JOHN B. BRECKINRIDGE, *President*
G. GLENN CLIFT, *Assistant Director*
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Young Historians

SHIRLEY HALL BROWN, *Membership*
Secretary

GEORGE M. CHINN, *DIRECTOR*

R. Gerald McMurtry, Director
The Lincoln National Life Foundation
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Dear Mr. McMurtry:

In regard to Marker #101 entitled, "Abraham Lincoln", we now have the inscription which reads as follows:

Two miles northeast of here Abraham Lincoln, grandfather of the President, was massacred by Indians in May, 1786. Long Run Baptist Church, standing on the Lincoln land grant, marks the traditional site of the pioneers grave."

Location: Stands at the point where Long Run Road enters U.S. Highway 60.

If you need any other assistance, please feel free to call on us.

Yours very truly,

Betty Thompson, Secretary
W. A. Wentworth, Chairman
Kentucky Historical Highway Marker Program

WAW/bct

August 6, 1962

Mr. W. A. Wentworth, Chairman
Kentucky Historical Highway Marker Program
P. O. Box 104
Frankfort, Kentucky

Dear Mr. Wentworth:

Many thanks for the wording on your highway marker #101 which deals with the massacre of Lincoln's grandfather at Long Run in Jefferson County.

You have given me a great deal of help which I appreciate very much. I will send you some of my bulletins, once they are published

Yours sincerely,

R. Gerald McMurtry

RGM:md

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

2825 LEXINGTON ROAD

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY 40206

June 11, 1965

JERRY VARDAMAN
BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

The Lincoln National Life
Insurance Company
Lincoln National Life Foundation
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Attention: Dr. R. Gearld McMurty

Dear Sir:

I would like very much to secure all back copies of the little pamphlet "Lincoln Lore" which your company publishes. I am very much interested in Lincoln, and have been privileged to be the excavator of an old church where Abraham Lincoln's grandfather was reputedly buried. The story has it that Lincoln's grandfather was shot and killed by an Indian, and was buried on the grounds of the Long Run Baptist Church here in the vicinity of Louisville (about fifteen miles due east). We were able to disprove many theories which had been held, by our excavation work. As far as I know, it is one of the few excavations which has been carried out in connection with Lincoln's life. It is amazing how much excavations could do to clarify other phases of Lincoln's life if funds were available. That is another story of course, but I want to say, I would like to have all available pamphlets that you have on Lincoln, and I would be most grateful to be put on your future mailing list.

Gratefully yours,

Jerry Vardaman

Jerry Vardaman

JV:gs

Packet sent 6-17-65

June 23, 1965

Mr. Jerry Vardaman
Biblical Archaeology
2825 Lexington Road
Louisville, Kentucky 40206

Dear Mr. Vardaman:

I have your letter of June 11th requesting a complete file of Lincoln Lore which today numbers 1529 bulletins. Bulletin No. 1 was published on April 15, 1929.

No complete files are available except in second hand book stores where they bring about \$350.

We will be happy to place your name on our mailing list to receive the bulletin. We will also send you the issues up to date for 1965.

Through the newspapers I watched with interest your excavations at Long Run. The only other excavations that I know that have been made were Lincoln's home lot in Springfield and the village of New Salem.

We have sent you a packet of Lincoln literature which I hope you found interesting.

Yours sincerely,

R. Gerald McMurtry

RCM/hcs

3/3/19

Historic Church's Walls Crumbling

"Danger—Keep Out by Order of the Recreation Board."

These words greet visitors to the old Long Run Baptist Church and cemetery less than eight years after the Jefferson County Fiscal Court set the Lincoln landmark aside as an "historic shrine."

The church's red-brick walls are so deteriorated that Charlie Vettiner, Metropolitan Park and Recreation Board director, fears they could come crumbling down any time. "A good strong wind or a sonic boom could do it," he said.

If the walls fall, one casualty could be the headstone said to mark the grave of

Abraham Linkhorn, grandfather of President Abraham Lincoln. (Such variations in the spelling of names were common in pioneer days.) The marker stands only a step or two from the south wall of the burned-out church.

But Vettiner said the real danger is to the hundreds of people who visit the shrine on any weekend in good weather. They often ignore the warning sign, he noted, and said "there could be 20 people under the south wall when it goes."

The landmark is on the eastern boundary of Jefferson County near U.S. 60.

Vettiner said in an interview yesterday

that he hopes the church can be restored, but he emphasized that the hazard must be eliminated soon—even by tearing down what remains of the structure if there is no alternative.

He said the park and recreation board placed guards at the site last summer on weekends to keep visitors away from the walls. However, the deterioration of the walls has worsened during the winter and board members have expressed growing concern.

At a meeting Thursday the board considered the problem, but referred it to Fiscal Court after hearing that the court must approve any capital outlay for restoration. Vettiner said an engineer recently estimated the cost of "firming up" the walls at more than \$4,000. Full-scale restoration of the church would cost much more, Vettiner said.

The church building itself has no direct connection with the Lincoln family. It was built in 1845 on the site of a log home built by Abraham Linkhorn sometime before 1780.

Linkhorn was slain by Indians while planting corn on the site in 1786 and his family soon abandoned the 400-acre homestead to join his widow's relatives in Washington County, Ky. The log structure then became the first home of the Long Run Baptist Church.

Linkhorn's eldest son later deeded the church land to a member of the congregation. A stone meeting house was built about 1798 and in 1845 the present brick structure replaced it.

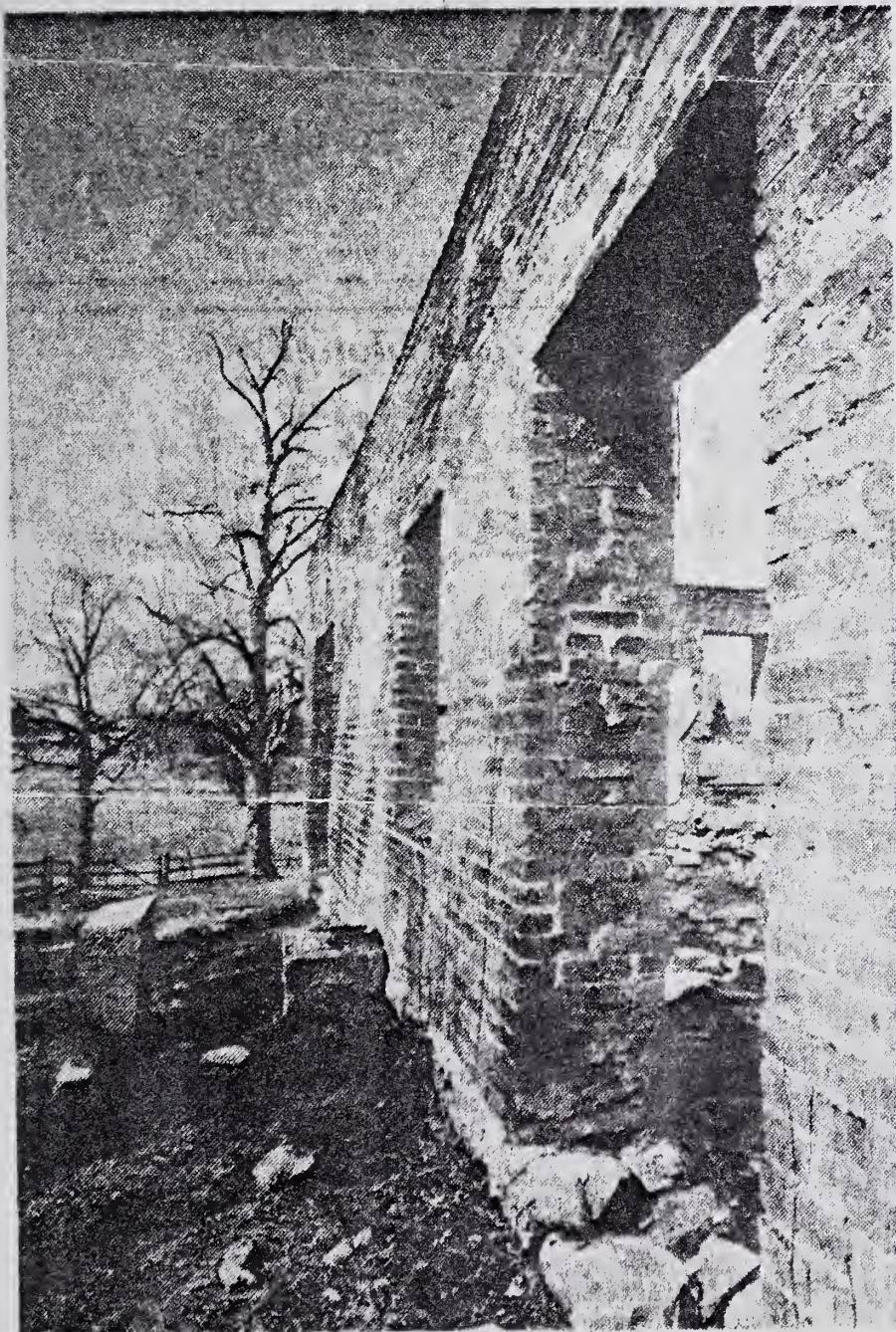
The church has historical links with many early Jefferson County families and has additional ties to the U.S. presidency through former President Harry S. Truman. Truman's great-uncle, Warfield Young, is buried there. His two grandmothers and one of his grandfathers were members of the church and another great-uncle, William Gregg, is believed to have given the bricks for the 1845 structure.

Jefferson County bought the church and graveyard in 1961. A Christmas Eve fire in 1960 had left only the walls and chimneys standing. Debris was removed by the county Road Department and a split-rail fence built around the cemetery.

In 1965 Fiscal Court placed the landmark under the supervision of the park and recreation board. A chain-link fence was put up outside the split-rail fence to keep out cattle and discourage vandalism and the Linkhorn marker was erected.

But plans for other improvements, including supports for the church walls and a shingle roof, did not bear fruit. Many gravestones remain in disarray around the church.

Vettiner suggested yesterday that the county probably could count on considerable volunteer help in restoring the landmark, including that of historical societies, clubs and school history classes.



Staff Photo by Thomas Mitchell

A GRANITE HEADSTONE marking the grave of Abraham Lincoln's grandfather is dwarfed by the south wall of the Long Run Baptist Church that is threatening to tumble down on it.

JEFFERSON COUNTY
KENTUCKY : CONGREGAL CHURCH

DRAWER 11

KENTUCKY CBV COUNTY - TOWNS

